



## GARDEN CLUB OF CAPE CORAL

*Life is all about balance. You don't always need to be getting stuff done. Sometimes it's perfectly okay, and absolutely necessary, to shut down, kick back, and do nothing.*

~ Lori Deschene

Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.,  
Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., Florida  
Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. (District IX) and  
Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council

## MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER

### *May 2023 Meeting*

The May meeting will take place at Palmetto Pine Country Club. We look forward to seeing you there at our meeting on Wednesday, May 10, starting at 5:45 p.m. (1940 SW 9th Court, Cape Coral, off Skyline Boulevard). Cathy Dunn, Program Chair, has arranged for Wendy Sprague to be our guest speaker. Wendy is a Lee County Master Gardener Volunteer who will speak to us on "Bees and How to Attract Them."

Our business meeting will follow as we will be celebrating our new President and Board Officers with their Installation for the 2023-2025 Season and our 26th Club Anniversary.



*May the warmth of the sun and the fresh breeze of May greet you with a warm hello!!*



*Happy moments, happy thoughts, happy dreams, happy feelings, Happy Birthday!!*

Tanya Rowland – May 1  
Ann Block – May 3  
Frannie Cox – May 3  
Sherry Embrey – May 3  
Mary Ann Sloan-Greiner – May 6  
Andrea Garlanger – May 7  
Nora Sansone Hoover – May 11  
Mary Kay Robbins-Kralapp – May 20  
Linda Keirstead – May 21  
Jane Anderson – May 23  
Cynthia Mahoney – May 24  
Linda Spadaccini – May 28  
Betty McCullough – May 29  
Elsa Schutzman – May 31

### **SAVE THE DATE!!! UPCOMING GARDEN CLUB OF CAPE CORAL EVENTS**

**May 13 – Saturday  
Butterfly Estates – Fort Myers  
Lunch at Cristof's on McGregor**

**(Sign-up sheets will be available at the meeting)**

## Marty Ward Annual Merit Awards

Congratulations to the three Cape Coral high school seniors who were recently granted a total of \$7,050 through the Marty Ward Annual Merit Scholarship Awards Program at the Garden Club's April meeting. These awards are given to local students who excel academically and in their environmental efforts as active members in our community. The 13th annual awards, in memory of club co-founder Marty Ward, were presented by Co-Chairs Cheryl Byrd and Bonnie Manuel to Reina Diaz of Island Coast High School, Eric Feichthaler of Oasis High School, and Chase Qurollo of Cape Coral High School. The students were selected because of their academic achievements, leadership and hands-on participation in horticulture, agriculture, hydrology and natural resources, as well as commitment to continue with their efforts in conserving our precious environment for the future. Reina Diaz also received the fourth annual award in memory of Donna Conway, funded by the Conway family and friends in 2020, due to the constant dedication throughout her four years in high school to the study of agricultural sciences and the creation of raised gardens and hydroponic systems around several schools in Lee County.



*Chase Qurollo,  
Reina Diaz and  
Eric Feichthaler, Jr.*



## FFGC State Convention in Kissimmee, Florida – April 18-20 – Cathy Dunn

The annual Florida Federation of Garden Clubs State Convention was held in Kissimmee, Florida on April 18-20. Cathy Dunn was chosen by our Board to attend the convention for the second consecutive year. About 315 garden club members from all over the state of Florida attended this event, and it is always interesting to learn about the projects and activities of various garden clubs in our state. The conference included two mornings of business meetings, a morning workshop, lunch with a speaker, an afternoon workshop and dinner with a speaker. Cathy attended workshops on Invasive Plants, Edible Plants in the Garden, Making your Horticulture Flower Show Entries Pop, and Floral Design Study Units. Each workshop was not only interesting but also provided valuable information. Cathy has compiled and passed along guidelines on flower show horticulture entries to our Board and the Floral Design Group. Next year's convention will be held in Jacksonville and will mark the FFGC's 100th Anniversary and promises to be another wonderful event!



# New Member Tea – April 15

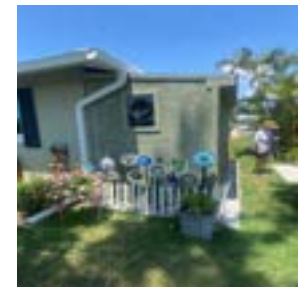
The Garden Club hosted a fabulous New Member Tea on April 15 which also included a tour of three beautiful gardens. We would like to extend a big thank you to Cheryl Buckley, Joanne Kishfy and Beverly Nugent for their gorgeous garden tours and a huge thank you to Beverly and John Nugent for hosting the New Member Tea. The chair of the gorgeous garden tours, Beverly Nugent, along with the other volunteers, did such an amazing job organizing such a lovely event. It was a very hot day, but we all managed to enjoy the garden tours and most of all the time that we were able to spend together.



*Patty Lyon, Kay Davis, Tanya Rowland, Mary Kay Robbins-Kralapp, Peggy Cruz, Donna Schmidt, Bonnie Klockner, Rachele Epp and Penny Salvesen*

*Donna Dunker, Cheryl Buckley, Jane Anderson, Tina Campanella, Peggy Cruz, Chandra Girdhari and Claude Anderson*

(Not pictured but attended: Janice Johnsen and Linda Spadaccini. New members not in attendance: Jennifer Asumaa, Susie Tribula and Janine Egler,)





## **Ft. Myers-Lee County Garden Council Meeting – May 12**

The next Garden Council general meeting will take place on Friday, May 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Our very own Sylvia Swartz will be installed as the Council's new President. There will also be a presentation by David Outerbridge, Director of Lee County UF/IFAS, "Wild Edibles of Florida." The address is 2166 Virginia Avenue in Ft. Myers if you can attend. Hope to see you there!



## **Garden Club Trip to the Butterfly Estates – May 13**

The Garden Club has scheduled a trip to the Butterfly Estates in Ft. Myers on Saturday, May 13. We are carpooling from the Coralwood Shopping Center located at 230 Del Prado Boulevard in Cape Coral. We will meet in the parking lot across from Bealls close to the road. We will be leaving at 9:30 a.m. The parking lot at the Butterfly Estates is located at 1815 Hough St. The cost is \$7 per visitor (cash only please). A gift shop and the DAAS Co-op Art Gallery are also located at the Butterfly Estates. Lunch will follow at Cristof's on 10231 McGregor Blvd in Ft. Myers. Thank you Cindy Wasilak and Carol Arnholt for organizing this event!



## **Other Local Flower and Gardening Events**

### **May 7 – Edison & Ford Winter Estates – A Mother's Day Floral Workshop – 10:00 a.m.**

This workshop taking place on Sunday, May 7, will instruct participants how to create a decorative basket or vase filled with flowers. Can be purchased as a gift for mothers, daughters, sisters or other special women. The class will be taught by floral designer, Anita Singh. To ensure adequate supplies, registration is required. All flowers, tools, vessels and supplies will be provided, along with light refreshments and an apron. Students of all experience levels are welcome.

### **May 13 – Garden Talk: Growing Garden Treasures and Curiosities – 10 a.m.**

This seminar will take place on Saturday, May 13. Some gardeners like to grow plants or trees that are uncommon or unusual. These plants beg to be shown off! Plants that are curiosities or treasures have unique characteristics and will be highlighted in this Garden Talk. A tree might have unusual bark, a flower could have an uncommon color or shape, or a plant could have exceptionally large fruit. Many of the plants that will be covered are growing in the botanical gardens at Edison and Ford Winter Estates and some will also be available for sale in our Garden Shoppe, so participants can plant them in their own yard! The cost is \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members. Advance registration is not required.

**Note:** Additional information as well as ticket information for the workshops is available on-line at [Fort Myers Museums, Attractions, Things To Do | Edison Ford Winter Estates](#).

### **May 16 - District 9 Spring Meeting in Punta Gorda – 8:30 a.m. coffee with meeting to follow at 9:30 a.m.**

Please feel free to join the members of District 9 on Tuesday, May 16 to welcome their new Director and Board and learn a little more about District 9 and its officers. The meeting will be located at the Isles Yacht Club, 1780 W. Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda. Ann Block recently sent out an email on April 30 that includes additional information and the registration form. The deadline to register is May 10. A few of our members are also on this Board or are committee chairs – Susan Lawson, Charlene Anderson and Sylvia Swartz.



## **Name Tags**

Upgraded name tags are currently available. If you requested a new upgraded name tag at the April meeting, please contact Terry Fisher (Terry's information is in the member directory). If you wish to purchase an upgraded name tag at a cost of \$8.00, please see Terry at the May meeting.



## Summer Socials

Debbie Cooper, our super summer social maven, will once again be scheduling events during the upcoming summer months. So be on the lookout for emails from Debbie announcing our special get togethers.



## The Ground Diaries

Twila Thalberg recently asked what is a staghorn fern and what are they all about. They look the part with their elegant long fronds that do indeed resemble stag antlers. Below is an article that UF|IFAS posted to their website under Gardening Solutions.

Once an uncommon plant find, staghorn fern (*Platycerium* spp.) is now quite popular and widely available. Beginner (or easily-distracted) gardeners in Florida should consider growing this fascinating tropical plant.

Staghorn fern thrives in Florida's heat and humidity; it grows quite well in South Florida and can be grown in North and Central Florida if protected from frosts and freezes.

### *Characteristics*

With its beautiful and unusual foliage, the staghorn fern is found throughout much of the tropical world. The staghorn fern is a member of the Polypodiaceae family; there are presently eighteen known species, as well as many varieties and hybrids of this plant. This plant is an epiphyte, meaning it gets moisture and nutrients from the air. Staghorn is found growing harmlessly on tree trunks, branches, or even rocks.

Staghorn fern produces two distinctly different fronds which are either basal or foliar. Basal fronds are also called shields; they are small, flat leaves that cover the root structure. These fronds are sterile and help with nutrient uptake by collecting water and fallen plant debris. Foliar fronds are the more eye-catching upright fronds produced by the plant. The underside of foliar fronds is where you'll find brownish reproductive structures, called sporangia. Gardeners will sometimes see what looks like brown felt on the tips of the fronds and wonder if it's a cause for concern—it's just the normal sporangia they're seeing.

Staghorn ferns flourish in warm, humid climates and should be protected from cold conditions. It's generally considered a tender plant; most species can't tolerate temperatures below 55 °F. However, *Platycerium bifurcatum* and *Platycerium veitchii* can withstand temperatures as low as 30 °F. While some species of staghorn fern can be a bit difficult to care for, these two species are low-maintenance and commonly grown. Other easy-to-grow species of staghorn fern are *P. alcorni* and *P. hillii*.

### *Planting and Care*

Choosing the right place for your plant is an important step. While staghorn fern thrives in shaded and partially shaded areas, conditions with very low light are likely to encourage disease and pest development. Keep in mind, staghorn fern will need protection from any freezing temperatures. Mounting your staghorn somewhere protected, like under a tree or on a porch, will help protect it from frosts. However, gardeners in North and Central Florida should bring their ferns inside when extremely cold temperatures are expected, if possible.

As an epiphyte, the ideal planting spot for staghorn fern is mounted: on a slab of wood, some tree fern fiber, or even a rock. To mount your fern, shape several handfuls of sphagnum moss (or other well-drained growing medium) into a circular mound and "plant" your fern so that its basal fronds are in contact with the medium. To secure the fern to its planting surface, use plastic strips, nylon hose, or wire (as long as it's not copper). Another planting method is hanging a wire basket sideways and pack it with organic medium. When grown in a basket, small plants called pups will grow out of the back and sides of the basket to eventually cover the whole surface.

Large-growing staghorns can be remounted or divided if needed. You'll know it's time to remount your fern when the basal fronds have grown to the sides of your mount surface. In some instances ferns grow so large that remounting becomes impractical, but there's no need to worry; staghorns tolerate crowded conditions.

As far as irrigation is concerned, be sure not to overwater your plant. Since it can be hard to tell how moist or dry the planting medium is, it's best to wait until your fern wilts slightly before watering. Where a wilting fern will where quickly recover with water, an overwatered fern will rot and die. A good rule of thumb is to water once a week during warm, dry weather and less frequently during cool or cloudy weather.



Staghorn fern can benefit from the application of a fertilizer with a 1:1:1 ratio; as always, be sure to follow label instructions. While the fern is young, fertilizer should be applied monthly during warm months and every other month during the cooler months when its growth slows. Mature staghorns will thrive with a once- or twice-yearly fertilizer application.

Staghorn fern is an interesting and low-maintenance addition to any home. And you can share the growing fun through propagation—remove "pups" that emerge from the main plant and pass on to friends and family.

**Update:** According to the UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas, gardeners should plant staghorn ferns with caution and manage their growth to prevent escape.

If you have a question about gardening that you would like to include in The Ground Diaries section of the newsletter, please send an email to Donna Schmidt.

**Our monthly newsletter is always available online – go to our website at <https://www.gardenclubofcapecoral.com/getinvolved/newsletter>  
Comments and suggestions are always welcome!  
Please contact me at [newsletter@gardenclubofcapecoral.com](mailto:newsletter@gardenclubofcapecoral.com)  
Donna Schmidt**

